

**AMENDMENT**

Please amend the application without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

9. (Four Times Amended) A process for the production of plants with improved growth characteristics, which comprises the following steps:

- a) transferring and integrating a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide coding region comprising a prokaryotic ammonium-specific asparagine synthetase, type A, coding region linked to a chloroplast leader sequence for import of the asparagine synthetase into chloroplasts or plastids of a plant cell, wherein said nucleic acid is operatively linked to a regulatory sequence for expression in said plant cell;
- b) transferring and integrating a nucleic acid for expression of an antisense chloroplastic glutamine synthetase RNA or portion thereof comprising transferring and integrating an anti-sense chloroplastic glutamine synthetase nucleic acid operatively linked to a regulatory sequence for expression of said anti-sense RNA or portion thereof in said cell to make a transformed cell; and
- c) regenerating intact and fertile plants from the transformed cells, thereby producing plants with improved growth characteristics.

11. (Four Times Amended) A plant cell obtainable by the method of claim 9, comprising:

- a) a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide coding region comprising a prokaryotic ammonium-specific asparagine synthetase, type A, coding region linked to a chloroplast leader sequence for import of the asparagine synthetase into chloroplasts or plastids of a plant cell, wherein said nucleic acid is operatively linked to a regulatory sequence for expression in said plant cell; and
- b) a second nucleic acid for expression of an anti-sense RNA to an endogenous chloroplastic glutamine synthetase gene or portion thereof comprising a nucleic acid comprising an endogenous chloroplastic glutamine synthetase or portion